Chapter 122: Booming Reunion

Holding her breath, the girl creeps though the darkness with her footsteps mute.

She draws her small frame even smaller than usual, paying heed to the rustling of her clothes. Her hand stays over her mouth, for if she fails to physically obstruct it, she'll let slip her wheezy breathing.

She truly wishes that her heartbeat's incessant pounding could shush itself too.

The auburn-haired girl, Petra, walks through the finally-familiar mansion anxiously, as if lost in an unfamiliar world.
In this instant, she is truly grateful for the fluffy carpeting over the floors. She found it laborious to walk on, but it's thanks to it that she can walk without producing any noisy footsteps.

She pledges to herself that, should she get another chance to clean them, she'll put all her gratitude and diligence into their washing.

Should she not allocate her attention into unrelated topics like laundry, her barely-moving legs will come to a stop. Even now she was proceeding at the slow pace of a caterpillar, so what would happen if she stopped completely? Just thinking it terrified her.

She presently loathed the length of this long, stretching, endless corridor.

Petra had been overjoyed when she was accepted to work in this large mansion.
Although near to the village, Petra considered this mansion an extremely faraway place. It wasn't a problem of distance. It was a problem of social position.

The governor and lord of the mansion the Margrave would come to Arlam Village during his spare time.
Although nobility, he assumed no pretentious airs, and he laughed off and forgave the impolite remarks of children. Petra had never heard the villagers badmouth the Margrave except on the topic of his dress.
And Petra had not particularly paid special focus on the Margrave either.

But she had always admired the size of his mansion.
Being from a small village and with two normal parents, Petra would never reach this place. While she had talked about wanting to go to the Capital and make clothes when she grew up, that was merely a dream she created that was appropriate to her standing. She knew from childhood how to give up on reaching for things that she would never attain.

When Petra was unexpectedly given a chance to work at the mansion.
And to add to that, she would be with someone who saved her life and she felt some feelings towards. Which fact delighted her more? Keep it secret, but the latter one just slightly wins out.

Regardless, her employment in this mansion was the start of a dreamlike life for Petra.
While the expansive hallways, abundant rooms, and extensive time spent on cleaning did dizzy her, the hectic days brought joy to Petra's life.

This place of aspiration and dreams now chilled her to her core with how it terrified her.

Petra doesn't know what happened, or what was going on.

What she does know is that she had finished her work, as usual, and has just had dinner alone with her senior maid, Frederica.

Petra stood on a stool was she cleaned the dishes, while Frederica collected the meal which had been meant for Beatrice-sama. They had failed to get it to her.
Petra has never seen Beatrie even once. She did sometimes wonder whether she really existed, but seeing that Frederica, Emilia, and Subaru seemed to know her, Petra went along with it without saying anything.

The lords of the mansion, somewhere far away.
Ignoring the servants Petra and Frederica, two people remained in this mansion. One was the unseen Beatrice, and the other was the girl called Rem.
Neither of them would eat meals, which somewhat dissatisfied Petra.

But Petra pitied the sleeping Rem, and she could not forget how carefully Subaru treated the girl. Subaru's expression as he gazed at Rem's face was incredibly vivid, so emotional and anguished that Petra hesitated to even feel jealous.
And so—

Petra: “...I gotta save Rem-san.”

This unwittingly-voiced verdict alone spurred Petra's actions.

After Frederica disposed of Beatrice's dinner and Petra cleared away the dishes, Frederica instructed Petra to double-check the work itinerary for tomorrow alongside other things.
Petra truly wanted to help Frederica with the leftover work, but being still midway through her physical development, Petra's body would not withstand the fatigue of late nights. That Frederica acknowledge Petra's enthusiasm and then send her off to bed was the usual way of things.

But tonight, while on the way to her room, something irregular happened.

—All of the lights in the mansion turned off.

Surprised by the sudden darkness, Petra clung to nearby Frederica. Frederica took her tenderly in a hold, and after speaking words upon reassuring words, held her breath.

Petra would never forget how the atmosphere froze.
She had experienced this heavy aura before. The anxiety coursing inside her led her to strengthen her grip on Frederica, who quietly drew her hands away.

Frederica: “Petra. Be a good girl, listen to me. —Use the stairway behind us, and exit. Without making any sound, silently, as fast as you are able, flee.”

Petra: “B-but what about you?”

Frederica: “I'll follow soon behind. Once you have exited the mansion, run to the village. After we safely reconvene, we will wait until morning to tidy everything up.”

Frederica faced forward as she spoke her gentle words.
She then pushed Petra lightly behind her, creating distance between herself and Frederica. The misty air hid the moon back then, providing her with absolutely zero sources of light.

Petra sensed Frederica stepping silently forward.
Simultaneously, Petra obeyed Frederica's instructions and set out down the corridor, her path opposite to Frederica's. She managed to reach the stairway, and just when she thought to proceed down, remembered.

Petra: “This is... just like the forest.”

She remembered where she had experienced this heavy, freezing atmosphere before.
This was the aura from two months ago, when she and the other village children had entered the forest.

The aura she had felt when in the middle of a forest full of bloodthirsty witchbeasts, with her life in peril.

Petra: “—I gotta.”

The instant she realised that, Petra's feet proceeded not downstairs, but up.
She remembered Frederica's instructions. She did feel guilty for violating them.

But she could not leave Rem in a mansion identical to that forest.
Because she remembered how Subaru had brought her out of those terrifying woods back then.

Petra: “—ah,”

After thinking back on those scary memories, Petra senses that she is near her destination.
Make no sound. Go unnoticed. By stubbornly adhering to those rules, her sluggish journey reaches the end of its path.

Just reaching Rem's room did not make small Petra capable of carrying and fleeing with her.
Petra had been so overwhelmed by urgency that she had not even considered that fact. She merely though that, should she reach Rem's sleeping room and confirm that she was there, everything would work out.

A sense of duty unfitting to her small stature, and the terror of knowing that death was near, harangued her.
Nobody could fault Petra for failing to notice the obvious.

Just a few more steps, a few more meters, two rooms away, and there it would be.

Almost no distance at all left to reach her destination.
Her hear pounds so loud it could explode, the noise of her breathing slipping out between her fingers.

Just a little further, just a little more, just a—

—Reaching the room, Petra looks up.
And that's when it happens. When, outside the hallway window, wind blows aside the clouds that block the moon.

Moonlight beams in through the window, bringing colour to a once-dark world.
And Petra sees it.

???: “My, what an adorable maid.”

A woman so dark as to meld into the shadows stands directly in front of her.
Between Petra and the door, just three steps away.

She is a tall woman, with long hair.
Her sensual clothes display her voluptuous body gregariously. Her hand gives her braid a flick as she calmly approaches, all exceptionally erotic.
Provided that you fail to notice the large, gleaming knife in her free hand.

Woman: “From what I'm told, I have two targets with one more appended. You're the little maid, aren't you?”

Petra: “...au,”

Woman: “You're shivering? Don't worry. —Your guts are bound to be pretty. Girls with futures always have beautiful entrails.”

Petra has no idea what she is saying.

But she does know that her advance is synonymous with the approach of death.
Petra knows this, but her feet freeze in too much terror to move.

The slender woman holds an unfittingly large knife.
Once that thing strikes her, Petra's life will be messily reaped.
And yet,

Woman: “Good girl. ...I'll send you to meet the angels.”

Heartlessly, the woman raises her knife, the shivering girl as her target.
The blade slices through wind, cutting into Petra's belly—soon.

???: “PETRA!!”

A large silhouette swoops in from the other end of the corridor, cutting into the space between Petra and the knife, sparks flying alongside shrill metallic noise.
Petra's protector, their long blonde hair fluttering, is a very familiar character to her.
There is only one person with a back so large and dependable that it does not seem that of a woman.

Petra: “Big Sis Frederica!”

Frederica: “You naughty girl, Petra. I told you to flee... you are going to get a scolding after this.”

Petra: “Y-yes m'aam!”

Says Frederica in a stern tone as she glances back at Petra.
Petra trembles at the words *naughty girl,* nodding several times at Frederica's back in tears.

Woman: “You're the big maid? Big did indeed mean big.”

With the two having their exchange in front of her, the knife-wielding woman retreats a short way and tilts her head. The way her braid sways with the movement doesn't match with the woman's

strangeness, seeming somewhat comical.

Frederica: “My large size does bother me, you realise. Likely from my father.”

Woman: “Then your father was big. And when you're that big, you're bound to have superb guts. I'm excited.”

Frederica: “Your hobbies cannot be called tasteful.”

Woman: “Women's guts are brighter and more vivid than men's. I'll do a comparison with yours, and teach you that.”

Frederica jabs her arms out in front of her as she takes combat stance.
Her hands come adorned with clawed cestus, which are likely the weapon which parried the woman's strike.
They make use of Frederica's large, powerful build, so you could call it a weapon suited for her, but...

Frederica: “Frustratingly, this is not going to prove an adequate match.”

Woman: “You do look like you have some ability to you, but probably, not as much as me. After an experience in the Capital where I practically died, my skills have gotten better.”

Frederica: “I see. I find myself rather wishing to curse whoever failed to terminate you.”

Cold sweat rises on Frederica's brow.
The overwhelming grisliness radiating from this woman makes Frederica feel the strength disparity with just a glance. She looks like she is merely standing there, doing nothing, and yet a thick aura of death exudes from her.

How many lives did she reap to radiate this ghastliness?

Frederica: “Petra. This time, truly do leave the mansion. I shall stall her.”

Petra: “B-But, Big Sis...”

Petra glances at the door to the room beside them.
With that, Frederica comprehends why Petra disobeyed her orders and came here.
And so,

Frederica: “I would not know who has commissioned you... but it would appear that Petra and I are listed as targets.”

Woman: “Yes, you are. You, the little maid, and the spirit girl. I'm not exactly satisfied with the numbers, but I've never opened a spirit's stomach before, so I'm excited for it. I was just a step behind last time and didn't manage to do it.”

Frederica: “You certainly divulged that information smoothly. Does this not disqualify you as a professional?”

Woman: “I don't mind it. Your mouth's going to stop working soon, and if you're thinking to complain to my employer, then I just have to keep you quiet.”

Frederica: “How deranged.”

This conversation could give someone a headache.
Frederica senses that speaking with the woman any further will be pointless. Regardless, she had managed to get the answers that she wished to hear.

Frederica: “Petra. She is targeting yourself, myself, and Beatrice-sama. Do you understand?”

Petra: “—Yes, m'aam.”

Petra nods as she wipes away her tears.
With that last exchange, and this statement, Petra supposes Frederica's intentions.

She's a smart girl. A good student. Someone Frederica doesn't want to die.

Frederica: “Leave!”

Petra: “Yes m'aam!”

Petra practically trips over herself as she breaks into a run.
Immediately, the black-garbed woman throws something at her. Four knives, slicing through wind as they loom in on Petra's back. Their superb aim is brilliantly disgusting, and a snap of Frederica's cestus barely manages to deflect them.

Shrill metallic noise peals out as all the thrown knives rebound, thrown off course.
Petra does not even look back as she flees. She trusts Frederica entirely. And she has to answer to her demands.

Woman: “She's a good girl.”

Frederica: “Yes, she's my pride!”

Frederica swings her left cestus at the woman, who dodges by tilting forward slightly. However, then targeting the stooped woman's stomach, Frederica unleashes a kick.
Frederica's kick drills through the air, capable of destroying walls. Unlike her normal human mother, Frederica's father was a half-blood from a lineage of fighting creatures. While she did not entirely approve of the blood coursing through her veins, she was thankful for its strength this time.

The kick slams into the woman, her eyes wide. She immediate brings her free hand up to block, but the kick will be more than powerful enough to snap those skinny arms of hers and—

Frederica: “Wh!?”

Woman: “Does this truly surprise you?”

Frederica swallows her breath. The woman's scarlet lips relax into a smile, everything upside down. The moment that her hand touched Frederica's leg, in a situation which would not forgive even the slightest error in force, the woman pulled off some nigh impossible acrobatics. She leaned her body weight into Frederica's kick and pulled herself into a one-handed handstand. Frederica shivers at the feather-light woman perched on her leg.

Frederica: “Spider!”

Woman: “Someone else called me the exact same thing not too long ago.”

Her voice sounds somewhat stung, but no such sentiment reflects in her ferocious strike.
Moonlight glints off her blade as it sweeps for Frederica's neck. Frederica immediately draws up her cestus to parry it, but both this arm, and the other which was supposed to aid in the deflection, scream in pain.
Although one-handed, and with arms far skinnier than Frederica's, the woman's grip strength is immense.

Sparks fly as the blades shriek against each other and Frederica lowers the leg that the woman is perched on, then aiming for her face and—

Woman: “Poor choice.”

The knife remains caught in the cestus's claws—as the woman uses this as a pivot point to flip even further overhead.
The trajectory of Frederica's kick was supposed to have caught her as she fell, but instead passes harmlessly beneath her as the woman's free hand reaches for her leg. Out from beneath her skirt, there peeks yet another foreboding knife.

Woman: “Show me your vibrant insides.”

Still upside down, the woman's two knives fly in from both sides, force enough to slice Frederica in two.

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Soaring down the staircase, Petra gives great swings of her little arms as she runs.

She hears the shrill peals of metal and metal from upstairs, and Frederica's quiet scream.
Petra was not foolish enough to stay fixated on stubborn, childish ideas that would keep her from listening to Frederica, fighting so that she could flee.

But even Petra, who knows absolutely nothing about fighting, does know this.
That shadowy woman is a horrifying monster.

Frederica's face had looked so scary, but the woman's smile hadn't faltered for even a moment. Petra was not unaware of the strength gap. In fact she was incredibly aware of it.
Leaving Frederica behind like this means that she will be murdered.

Petra: “But if, Beatrice-sama was here...!”

The is one last person present in this mansion.
It seems like the shadowy woman is unaware of Rem's presence. Naturally, Petra does figure that the woman will add Rem to her list of targets if she does find her, but so long as she and Frederica refrain from announcing the fact that Rem is here, it's unlikely that the woman will notice her.

Petra: “This one... not it, then this one!?”

Having descended the staircase, Petra opens a random nearby door and checks inside.
It's unbelievable, but apparently Beatrice lives inside a moving room in this mansion. Should you open many of the mansion's doors, eventually one will lead to Beatrice's room. That's how powerful of a magician she was.

Petra needs that magician's help right now.
If this person is present here, then she will surely help Frederica. She'll do away with that shadowy woman, and protect Petra's dream mansion.

Petra: “Not here... not here either... big sis!”

Out of breath and eyes flowing with tears, Petra is near to collapse.
She has opened all of the nearby doors in the servant's quarters. But Beatrice has not appeared. How long has it been since Frederica started fighting that woman?
Petra needs to hurry, really needs to hurry, and yet.

Petra: “Big, sis...”

She needs to run. But her legs won't move.
Petra claps her hand against her leg in an attempt to invigorate her withering heart. But it isn't enough. She can't be brave. And her hopes are seconds from waning dead also.

Petra: “—Subaru,”

With weakness dominating her heart, the name she calls in desperation belongs to someone who is not here.
It's the name of who Petra thinks is the bravest person in the world.

He is amazing and courageous, overpowering his shaking legs as he faces opponents he cannot possibly defeat.
When Petra and the other villages were in real danger, and she almost died, he was their saviour—and his name is the one she calls.
Even though she knows that he isn't here.

Petra: “Subaru, Subaru... help me, Subaru,”

???: “Alright, will do, Petra.”

Petra: “—wha”

Crying and with her face buried in her hands, the voice leads Petra to look up.
Tears blur her vision. Somebody is standing right in front of her.

They kneel down to match the cowering Petra's eye level, and,

???: “My bad for being late. But here I am to help you. ...Thank god you're safe, Petra.”

His familiar face with its nasty eyes gives her an awkward smile.
His expression as he tries his best to comfort Petra isn't tender in the slightest, which brings Petra absolute relief.

Petra: “Are you... Subaru? You're here?”

Subaru: “It's me, and I'm here. Everything's okay now.”

He gives a nod to comfort her. Petra reaches out to him.
She pats at his cheeks, and when she leans forward too far and falls, he catches her.

It's no hallucination and no dream, he is here. He is here for her.
She would love to bask in the relief it brings her. —But this is not the time for that.

Petra: “Subaru... Big Sis Frederica's fighting with a lady upstairs.”

Subaru: “Frederica is?”

Petra: “She's dark, with a big knife... and really scary.”

Subaru: “A dark horrifying lady with a huge knife... yeah, I know her.”

Subaru grimaces.
It seems like they both understand how threatening she is. Petra tugs Subaru's arm.

Petra: “Please, save Big Sis Frederica! Beat that lady, Subaru!”

Subaru: “Okay, just leave everything to me! ...Is what I wanna say, but if I face off against someone who Frederica can't beat, I'm gonna be a corpse in under a second!”

Petra: “—”

For an instant, Petra's heart threatens to flood with despair.
But Subaru's palm comes down to stroke Petra's head gently.

Subaru: “And so I sent in some crazy strong reinforcements instead.”

Subaru looks up as if staring at the floor above, apparently imagining the scene unfolding there. His expression is somewhere between relaxed and anxious, an undefined thing.

Subaru: “Have a nuisance being an incredible nuisance for the reunion, though.”

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Frederica is seconds from accepting as fact: *I am going to be sliced in two through the stomach.*

???: “Sorry fer this... but you ain't invited.”

Metal clashes against metal alongside a voice which sounds pleasantly displeased.
It's a contradiction, but true.

They sound excited, but also sound disgusted by their opponent.
Which is really to be expected.

Woman: “You...”

???: “Yer gonna be sittin' there downside up for fuckin' ever, eh!? —Get th'hell off!”

Her blades blocked and attack ineffectual, up slams a ferocious kick into the woman's chest. Her body curves into a C as she blasts away, and the man lowers his raised leg while he clatters his arms against each other.

Both his arms are equipped with silver, gleaming shields.
One one-handed shield for each arm, both covering his fists.

Man: “Accordin' t'th'Captain, they say THE BEST DEFENCE IS A GOOD OFFENCE.”

Sharp fangs bared, the man's teeth click as he speaks.

Man: “So there ya go. Got defensive shields set up t'go on offence. ...'S best offence and best defence happenin' at th'same time, so with two bests ain't it th'strongest?”

It's dumb, child-tier logic.
But this man is applying his child-tier idea, and using two shields as weapons.

The blond man takes a stance with his feet positioned far apart, glaring attentively at the opponent as he cranes his head back at Frederica.

Man: “Ain't I right, sis—whatth'frickin'hell yer huge!?”

Instantly, the warrior's atmosphere about him dissolves.
The man's—no—the boy's eyes shoot open in shock as he gazes Frederica top to bottom.

Boy: “Wh—yer serious!? That's my sis!? Ain't my sis meant't be smaller, skinner, with a softer lookin' face!? This ain't my sis, 's more like my bro.. agahh!?”

Frederica: “Do not be impolite.”

Frederica jabs her knee into the rude, staring boy's side.
The boy tumbles to the ground before sluggishly getting back up. Looking at his dizzied face, Frederica notices it. The scar on his forehead.

Frederica: “Is that you, Garf?”

Garfiel: “Nevermind that, 'm I really safe t'be callin' yer Frederica... can't frickin' believe it... gahk!”

Frederica: “Do not neglect to appropriately refer to me as your elder sister.”

Halfway though standing up again, an elbow to the back sends Garfiel back into agony.
Looking at him in pain like this makes Frederica remember when they were young: they had no toys in SANCTUARY, and had use their bodies to stave away boredom.
Frederica had just flung Garfiel away with complete disregard for their nine-year age gap. Exactly the same as back then.

Frederica: “No. Garf... you have truly grown large.”

Garfiel: “'S just sounds like sarcasm when yer sayin' it, oi! N' just so you know, my amazin' self's still gonna be gettin' bigger! Don't think yer gonna be lookin' down't th'topp'er my head forever!”

Frederica: “Huhuhu, allow me to amend that. Your body may have grown larger, but you remain as small as always.”

Garfiel: “Th'hell was that!?”

Garfiel bares his teeth as he objects to Frederica's statement. This interaction with her little brother, the first time in ten years, fills Frederica with an unbelievable happiness.
Who would have thought that the day would come where she spoke with Garfiel outside SANCTUARY.

—Someone who ventured to SANCTUARY surely did well.

Ram, or Emilia, or Subaru? Which of them was it?

Frederica: “Ah, Otto-sama was also with you.”

Garfiel: “*Ha,* that guy flat never gets his payoff. Think about A MIGURD-MADE BRIDGE COLLAPSES ON THE USUAL and eh guess h's just that kind'a guy.”

Up arises the vision of a dejecting-looking grey-haired man.
While the siblings both reach this conclusion, from deep in the dark hallway there comes,

???: “Do you mind if I begin to act now?”

Garfiel: “Yer bothered waitin' fer us, pretty consid'rate of yer. 'F yer gonna be so nice then how about forgettin' yer work n' goin' damn home. My amazin' self ain't lookin' t'punch women around.”

Woman: “Goodness, how kind of you.”

Garfiel gestures as if swatting away a bug. The woman smiles.
Frederica taps Garfiel's back, for he is overwhelmingly lax.

Frederica: “Garf. You are going to have a painful time should you judge her by her womanly appearance.”

Garfiel: “Yeh I got it, she ain't anythin' normal. N'anyway y'better bet th'only lady n'the world who's gettin' my real lady treatment is Ram.”

Frederica: “If you believe that sounded cool, I will tell you that it was not cool in the slightest. Ram would snort at you.”

Garfiel: “Th'fuck!?”

Frederica looks astonished. Garfiel glances back at her, indignant.

—That instant, a silver disk comes shooting from the woman's hand.

A disc. Or no, it wasn't a disc, it's a knife rotating at insane speeds on the vertical. The thing whistles through the air too fast to see and it looms in on Garfiel, ready to split his head open and

splatter fresh blood about the corridor.

Garfiel: “Y'know,”

Woman: “—”

The metal shields clatter together as a searing shower of sparks bursts out.
The thrown knife slices the face of the raised right shield, before a deft shift in the thing's angle sends the knife flying up to pierce the ceiling. Garfiel goes without watching this, instead racing forward, gliding over the floor on approach to the woman as he raises his other shield.

Garfiel: “I did tell yer t'get th'hell out'v here, yeh?”

Woman: “I heard, and here's my response.”

Just before his fist can strike, the woman flits backward and yanks in her arm.
Immediately, the knife behind Garfiel rips out of the ceiling, rotating again with its momentum as it attacks him from behind.
A string is tied around the knife's handle, connected to the woman's other knife.

Frederica: “Garf!”

She is too slow to warn him.
The blade rotates as it closes in on Garfiel's arm, hoisted and seconds from slamming into the woman, ready to slice the appendage in two. But,

Garfiel: “—Fuckin' cheek!!”

Frederica: “—!?”

The instant that Frederica reaches him, or perhaps does not reach him, Garfiel shouts.
His arm explodes in girth. Golden fur coats it, the thing thick as a log, clearly not the limb of any human but instead that of an animal.
Even the woman has to look rattled.

With a roar, Garfiel slams his fist and the shield into the woman's stomach.
Of course, having paid not a speck of care to dodging, the knife protrudes from Garfiel's arm. But it has failed to cut through the thick limb and its coat of wiry fur entirely.

Woman: “—Gauh!?”

Garfiel: “Get outta here, woman!!”

Entirely bothered by the pain, the swing of Garfiel's fist blasts the woman away. Unable to kill the momentum, she slams into the ground, proceeding to bounce and roll further across the floor.
Garfiel watches her tumble as he yanks the knife out of his shoulder. His fangs sever the connecting string and he tosses the knife out a nearby window.

Garfiel: “Ha! KRUGAN SLAYS THE ENEMY EVEN MINUS HIS ARMS! 'F yer think m'gonna freak out'n cower at some pain, yer dead wrong, moron!”

Frederica: “The one being a moron is you!”

Garfiel: “Dgha!?”

Garfiel boasts, when his sister's fist strikes the back of his head.
Garfiel falls into a squat, glancing back in protest to the unforeseen chastisement.

Frederica: “Fighting in a manner which injures yourself... Grandmother would cry if she saw this.”

Garfiel: “Aeuh, guh... a-ain't like I don't know what th'granny'd think'v it...”

Frederica: “Is that how you are referring to Grandmother!? I do not recall raising you to be like this!”

Garfiel: “We ain't seen each other since I was four n' finally when we get our reunion yer doin' this, yer th' one who's bein' unbelievable here!”

Garfiel breathing jars. Frederica also glances forward, to find a black silhouette languidly getting up.

The woman quietly uprights herself and flips the knife around in her hand before catching the blood dripping from her mouth on her finger, and licking it. A lovely smile arises on her face.

Woman: “—Wonderful, you are. Very wonderful. A lively boy.”

Garfiel: “Honestly, my amazin' self wasn't thinkin' yer'd get right back after that one either. My bad, underestimated ya a lil'.”

Garfiel presses his hands together as he apologizes.
The exchange doesn't exactly seem like one between two monsters trying to kill each other, but it does lead Frederica to forget the passing of time for a moment.
She shakes her head, getting herself back together.

Frederica: “Garf! This woman is shrouded in mystery. Take care not to slacken your guard...”

Garfiel: “'M sayin' I got that. But anyway. Sist... sis, d'you know a girl called Rem?”

Frederica: “...? Yes, she is in this mansion. I, erm, heard that she is Ram's younger sister.”

Frederica isn't irrevocably certain about this point either.
Frederica has known Ram since childhood, and those memory include no younger sisters of hers.
But Subaru explained that Rem was Ram's younger sister, and she resembled her to a shocking degree. Apparently she was suffering from a Witch Cult affliction which erased her from everyone's memories.

Garfiel: “She look like Ram?”

Frederica: “Exactly like Ram. But that is no pardon for you to use her as a replacement.”

Garfiel: “I ain't gonna do anythin' scummy like that. Jus'lookin' t'check. —Seriously, then.”

During their conversation, the woman rolls her shoulders and rotates her legs, checking her physical condition.

Perhaps she's giving them time to have their conversation. Her thoughts aren't exactly clear.
Either way,

Garfiel: “Sis, 'f she's somewhere on this floor, find an openin'n bring her out. My amazin' hands're gonna be full dealin' with her.”

Frederica: “W-what are you saying? I will be fighting as well. With us together, our chances...”

Woman: “I truly wonder about that.”

Frederica looks at the woman, gaze sharp, when the woman conceals her smile beneath her knife.

Woman: “Please don't make such scary expressions. And I believe that your baby brother will prove that I'm not wrong in my statements.”

Frederica: “...Garf?”

Frederica's brows furrow in confusion.
Garfiel adjusts the angle of his shields.

Garfiel: “Sorry, sis. This ain't someone easy enough that I can keep worryin' 'bout what's goin' on behind me.”

Frederica: “Wha!”

You'll hold me back, is the judgement passed on speechless Frederica.
While she did recognize that her own abilities did not even touch that of the woman, it's still insulting to hear that you are so useless that you will be a detriment.

Garfiel: “Don't go misunderstandin' me, sis. I ain't sayin' yer a detriment.”

Frederica: “...Then what are you saying?”

Garfiel: “'F me n' this chick get serious, this place's gonna turn into a warzone.”

Garfiel points at himself, then to the woman. She smiles happily, as if affirming his words. She fiddles with her braid before stooping down forward.

Woman: “Exactly. ...And so it would be best that you stand down.”

Battle—a sense which only the truly strong can comprehend.
Recognizing that she is far outclassed, a frustration blazes inside Frederica.
She has reunited with her brother after ten years, and she cannot even assist him at all.

Garfiel: “Stop thinkin' bout pointless crap, sis.”

Frederica: “Garf...”

Garfiel: “Look't my arms. These shields're th'ones me and you played with when we were little. The startin' point for my strength now started with me n' you.”

Frederica's eyes widen.

Concern, care, and something other than those emotions comes through in his voice. Frederica feels that her younger brother has matured, her heart growing hot.

Garfiel: “Th'Captain still handed my ass t'me with th'power'v numbers. But bein' 'n top shape starts changin' that story too.”

Stepping forward, Garfiel clicks his teeth, batters his shields.

Garfiel: “Come at me, woman. This's my celebration fer leavin' SANCTUARY. N' I'm startin' it by annihilating th'first obstacle in my way!!”